



COSHAR Foundation, Inc.

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Dr. Sharon Allison-Ottey

Submitted via email
Ms. Betty Mercer
Director
Coalition for a Safe and Responsible Michigan
June 24, 2005

Dear Ms. Betty Mercer:

I would like to salute you in your efforts to prevent any deregulation to Michigan's carefully structured system of alcohol control through your work with the Coalition for a Safe and Responsible Michigan. The recent Supreme Court decision brought the battle back to Michigan and the state legislature. I am confident in your ability to educate the community about the need for regulation.

As a representative of the COSHAR Foundation, an organization representing over 8,000 faith and community based organizations in the United States with strong representation in Michigan, I am concerned about the impact of easier access to alcohol for our young people. I support a state's right to control the sale of alcohol and access to minors. Elimination of the face-to-face transaction in alcohol sales is a great risk to our public health system and if left untreated the risk can escalate into a full blown public health crisis. I continue to ask our elected leaders, why on earth would we want to make alcohol easier to access?

Allowing producer to consumer transactions would bypass a licensed, accountable retailer, and alcohol producers would avoid vital checks and balances, which protect minors and collect revenues. The result of allowing producer to consumer alcohol transactions would be easier underage access to alcohol. As concerned Michigan citizens work everyday to prevent alcohol sales to minors, allowing producer to consumer shipment of alcohol will open a door for youth to purchase alcohol with no face-to-face ID check.

Parents struggle everyday to protect their children from outside forces. We know from a survey released by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (July 2003) that parents' top concern is teens engaging in risky behavior as a result of being under the influence of alcohol. What parents may not be aware of is that as many as one million children are getting alcohol through the Internet or by home delivery according to government statistics. Not only is this a problem for parents but implications for the public health system are enormous. Alcohol related illnesses and deaths will undoubtedly increase as a result of easier access by our young people, further taxing an already burdened healthcare system.

I applaud your efforts and stand behind you in your fight to uphold the current alcohol control safeguards and thank you for working to protect the health and well-being of everyone in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sharon Allison-Ottey
Special Projects Director
COSHAR Foundation, Inc.